

1609/5103.

Decency and Order the Cement of Society:

BEING A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY

OF

Free and Accepted Mafons,

In the ENGLISH CHAPEL at KELSO,

JUNE 24, 1769.

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NEWCASTLE:

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To all LOVERS of
DECENCY and ORDER,
BOTH IN
CHURCH and STATE,
THE FOLLOWING
DISCOURSE

Is most humbly inscribed,

BY

RICHARD WALLIS.

1609 / 5103.

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

I COR. xiv. 40.

Let every Thing be done decently and in Order.

THAT Decency and good Order ought to be constantly maintained in every Society of Men is a Truth not to be disputed by any rational Mind. Where these are not kept up, Confusion, Indecency, and Disorder must necessarily ensue. Peace and Unanimity, the beautiful Offspring of Decency and Order, are of too delicate a Nature to take up their Habitations either in the Habitations of *Mesech*, or in the hostile Tents of *Kedar*. They flourish alone there where every Thing is adjusted with the nicest Decorum and Regularity.

THIS

THIS Observation holds good either in a religious or political Sense. No Body of Men, when assembled together, can perform a rational Worship to the great Author of their Beings without some decently-settled Order among them. If one should chuse to pray, a second should think it more eligible to preach, and a third should insist upon singing Psalms, what Confusion from this Disagreement of Sentiments and Action must of Necessity follow? To prevent this Disorder and Indecency the Apostle enjoined this Precept of my Text. The *Corinthians*, it seems, when they came together observed no Kind of Order; one Man hath a Psalm, that is, is fond of singing; another hath a Doctrine, that is, will preach; another hath a Tongue, that is, would speak in an unknown Language, which could not benefit the Audience; another hath a Reve-



Revelation, that is, hath something that is revealed to him by the Spirit of God, and therefore he chuses to declare it; another hath an Interpretation, and for that Reason wants to declare the true Sense and Meaning of some Portion of Scripture. This Propensity to speak all, at one and the same Time, must have produced great Disorders in their Assemblies, and therefore the Audience could reap no Benefit from such Indecency and Confusion. In order to correct this indecent Desire of shewing their several Gifts *St. Paul* tells them, that tho' they were filled with the Holy Ghost, yet they were Masters of their own Actions, and could speak, or hold their Peace, as they saw it convenient; and therefore commanded that they should not interrupt one another, because God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Order, Quietness, and Peace; and consequently, whatever spiritual Gifts they
 exer-

exercised in their Assemblies, they should use them at all Times with the greatest Propriety, Decency, and Order.

FROM this Behaviour of this great Apostle, I might here deduce the Necessity of Establishments in Religion, because after St. *Paul* had established Christianity among the *Corinthians*, he next, for the Sake of Decency and Order, established proper Forms or Modes of Behaviour when they were assembled together : But, as this is foreign to my present Purpose, I shall beg Leave to shew, that a strict Observance of Decency and good Order is necessary in every Part of our Journey through Life.

AND this we are obliged to,

FIRST, as Men endowed with Reason; secondly, as Members of Society; thirdly, as Christians; and lastly, as Masons.

FIRST,

FIRST then, let us consider how far Reason prescribes Decency and Order. Man is a compounded Being deriving his original both from Earth and Heaven. From Earth he has his Faculties in common with other Animals: But, from Heaven he derives his divine Guide and Lamp of Life of an immaterial and therefore of an immortal Nature. This divine Particle of Life gives Dignity to Man, makes him look farther than his Earth, causes him to observe his high Descent, that Angels are his Fellow-Creatures, and that the governing Principle within him is the Breath of God. With what Propriety, Decency, and Order then ought such a Creature to behave, whose Origin is so exceeding noble, and whose Dependance is upon God? Such an one does not pride himself, like many who can soar no higher than this paltry Earth, because he has sprung

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from Heroes, or descended from a long Race of Kings ; but, he is impressed with an high Sense of the Dignity of his Soul, which claims a near Alliance to the Deity himself. In Consequence of this noble Idea of himself, he always endeavours to think most justly, speaks with Decorum, and acts with Propriety. Duties, which regard himself, he practises with a resolute Niceness. To conquer his Passions he knows to be the noblest of all Conquests : He endeavours therefore to suppress the Swellings of Pride, the Grasping of Ambition, the Repinings of Envy, and every other rising Weakness of his Soul : But the amiable Affections, such as Love and Joy, he directs always, through God's Grace, to their proper Objects. He thinks it a Duty to remain, like a true and undaunted Soldier, fixed to his Post assigned him by the wise Disposer of the Drama ; hence he practises those too
much

much unfashionable Duties amongst many of the Rich and Great, Temperance and Chastity; from whence arises strength of Body, and Intrepidity of Mind; because, from the Body's Purity, the Mind must of Necessity derive a secret sympathetick Aid.

BESIDES, the Pleasure arising from this Life of Order and Decorum must be an additional Argument in Favour of Regularity and Decency. An innocent, and a regular Life, directed always according to the strict Rules of Reason and the Doctrines of the Gospel, must give a pleasure superior, superior far to the most indulgent Sense. All other Pleasure, like Quick Silver, eludes our quickest Grasp; but the Heart-felt Joy, arising from a conscious Rectitude of Mind and Manners, remains with us, like some trusty and tried Friend, a most useful and lasting Cordial upon

every the most different Stage of this most tranſient and dying Life.

BESIDES, this Pleaſure, ariſing in the Mind from conſcious Virtue, ends not with this preſent Scene of Life. It partly gives a Foretaſte of that ſpiritual Joy, which Angels and bleſſed Spirits muſt enjoy in the full'eſt Extent in Heaven : It is a Spur to imitate thoſe divine and illuſtrious Perfections of the Deity, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, and Mercy ; and by thus aiming at the perfecting our Natures, we ſhall prepare ourſelves for the Enjoyment of Pleaſures in an eternal State, which will never ſatiate, and which will never end.

By thus conſidering ourſelves as made for higher and more noble Attainments in a future ſtate of happy Exiſtence, by thinking ourſelves under the continual Care of an all-wiſe and watchful Providence,

vidence, and by knowing that as well every Transgression we are guilty of, as every Virtue we practise, are noted down in the Register of Heaven; how careful, how circumspect ought this to make us in every Scene of Life! how watchful over our Thoughts and Expressions, and how regular, orderly, and exemplary will all our Goings be! This Reason naturally prescribes to Man, as due to himself as an Individual: But when we consider Men in a State of Society, we shall find higher Obligations to a more strict Observance of Order and Decorum.

To Man placed in a State of Society many Duties arise. His Love must not be confined to self; but Self-Love is to be the Measure of his Conduct in social Life. He must not therefore let all his Regards center in his little self, but like the benevolent Author of his Nature, he will extend both his Benevolence and Beneficence, as Opportunity shall offer,
to

to all his Fellow-Men. His particular Attachment indeed must be to that Society and Community of which he is a Member: He will promote its Peace, its Happiness, its Commerce, and its Glory with all his Might. Whatever Station he is in, whether King or Subject, he will make all his Powers subservient to the publick Good. He will not connive at the selfish sinister Views of others, but will endeavour to bring them to behave with Order and Decorum. Well executed Laws he looks upon as the best Support of a State. Men by their due Execution preserve their Lives and Properties free from injurious Treatment; none break loose upon their Fellow-Members with Impunity; each Individual is equally concerned to bring every Offender to Justice: Hence arises national Order, and consequently, what this Nation has long wanted, national Harmony.

WELL

WELL would it be with every Society and Community of Men, if each Member would study to be quiet, minding their own Business, and endeavour by a decent and orderly Deportment to keep up that regular Subordination in Government without which no Government whatever can subsist happily. 'Tis easy to find Fault with any Machine whose Movements are wrong, but to rectify it and set it right must be the Province of the Artist: Just so it is with Governments, Faults or Errors may easily be perceived, but they ought not to be rectified either by a shameless Pen, or by the more dangerous Violence of a Mob. There is a decent Regard to be had to all Persons invested with legal Authority, otherwise it is impossible for the Wheels of Government to move right. All such Superiors therefore should be treated with Decency and Reverence, sup-
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posing their Measures at Times should be manifestly wrong. To treat them with Indecency and Disrespect is to lessen their Power of doing Good, is to make them contemptible in the Eyes of the People; and this is too frequently done by Men, whose only View it is, to raise themselves to Wealth and Power by the Depression of others. If Errors arise in Government, as what Society of Men can always subsist without Error, they cannot be corrected by Riot and Disorder, because no Order can possibly arise from Confusion. We should deal with a sickly Government, as we would with a diseased Body, where Corrosives are never applied when Lenitives will easily perform a Cure. It is therefore the Duty of every Member of Society to preserve a proper Decorum through the whole Tenor of his Conduct; because small Societies, and Communities of Men, like Stones well cemented together form
a strong

a strong and lasting Wall, by Concord grow strong, and by public Spirit and Love of Order grow mighty upon Earth. The Bundle of Sticks in the Fable were not easily broke, till divided and separated from each other; and the brave Roman durst not attack the two wounded Brothers, till he had, by a pretended Flight, brought them asunder. Thus Order produces Union, Union Peace, and Peace Strength and Firmness. Hence may all our jarring Interests, like some jarring Notes, which when well play'd produce an agreeable Harmony, unite in the Love of Decency, and in a Love of Order, because these will produce real Harmony in the Body politick.

AND as the Good of Society obliges us to an Observance of Decency and Order, so likewise Christianity enjoins us more particularly a decent and orderly Deportment.

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THAT which strikes at the very Root and first Principle of all Indecency and Disorder must be of the utmost Consequence and Importance to Mankind. Christianity does this: Its Commands extend to the Hearts of Men from whence good and evil Thoughts arise: It encourages what is good, and checks every rising Weakness in the very Bud: Christianity is to the Mind, what a laborious and industrious Husband-man is to his Ground; as the one does not allow any Propensity to Vice and Folly to spring up, so the other is watchful lest any noxious Weeds should sprout up and injure his rising Crop. Watchfulness, Prayer, and the Grace of God are proposed by the Gospel, as Guards of the Heart, and when these attend constantly, as Centinels, no evil Thought dares spring forth into Action. Ambition, that frequently makes Havock of Kingdoms, hides its
bloody

bloody Aspect. Covetousness, that too often grinds the Face of the Poor and Needy, sneaks off all abash'd. Lust, that without the least Compunction sends an aged Parent with Sorrow to the Grave, draws back his bloated Face with Confusion. Thus check'd is every black Passion at its first Rise, when Watchfulness, Prayer, and the Grace of God regulate every the least Motion of the human Heart.

BUT Christianity goes still farther. The Senses present all surrounding Objects to the Imagination. To prevent any Evil ensuing from thence, the Gospel commands us to beware how we look upon Beauty; how we hear the musical Modulations of a charming Voice; how we gratify our Palates either by the luscious Taste of Wine, or the varied Profusion of Meats. When the Senses are thus guarded, no disorderly

Motion can arise in the Heart. Nothing but the amiable Passions can have Place there: Whatever gives Glory to God, and brings Peace and Good to Society, must rise from thence. Those Fruits of the Spirit of God, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Meekness, Patience, and the like, all center there; and what a World of Disorder and Confusion would be avoided, if every Member of this Nation would seriously endeavour to guard their Hearts and Senses? We should have no Strife nor Contention then, but who should serve his King and Country best, or be Eyes to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, and to the utmost of his Power, relieve Distress in whatever Shape it appears,

BESIDES, Christianity obliges to the Observance of Order and Decency, by comparing Society to an human Body, where every Member is obliged to contribute

tribute to the Good of the Whole. No Member of Society, no more than any Member of the natural Body, can say with Propriety to another, *I have no Need of thee*. Each contributes according to their different Powers, and by a beautiful Subordination, to procure Ease, Safety, Health, and Vigour to the Whole. Thus a well plann'd Building, whether supported by the varied Orders of Columns, Arches, and Entablatures, or by mere Stone and Cement neatly polished and joined together, forms but one Body, tho' composed of various Materials, Wood, Stone, Cement, and Iron. Each of these in their several Stations produce Strength, Beauty, and Firmness to the Whole. Thus a Kingdom, like a large Building, is composed of various Orders, and each Order, when well cemented and united together by Benevolence and mutual good Offices, and disinterested Love of the Publick, produce
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an orderly and therefore happy political Body.

CHRISTIANITY still farther obliges us to observe Order and Decency, by forbidding us to give Offence to any Man either by Word or Action. If we are injured, we are commanded to shew our Christian Principles by a ready Forgiveness: We are forbid to return Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing, but contrarywise Blessing. The Sun must not go down upon our Wrath, lest it should settle into Malice and a Desire of Revenge. We are ordered to render a chearful Obedience to all legal Authority. To render unto *Cæsar* the Things that are *Cæsar's*, and to God the Things that are God's: Tribute we are to give where Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, and Honour to whom Honour. In all our Words and Expressions, whether in Discourse or in writing, we should
always

always make Use of Decency and good Manners, either in Defence of civil or religious Truths. Scurrility and Abuse shew not only an ill-principled Mind, but a manifest Design, by such a Display of Rancour and Malice, to throw Things, whether religious or civil, into Confusion and Disorder. Even Truth itself suffers when defended by an indiscreet Zeal. Truth, like Light, displays herself the more, when freed both from the Mists of Prejudice, and the dark Clouds of Passion. Gentleness, Meekness, Affability, and brotherly Kindness should wait upon her Steps, and then with every well disposed Mind she will meet with a gracious Reception. Thus every Mind well principled in the Christian Doctrines will guide its Thoughts, Words, and Actions at all Times with Discretion: Keeping firm to this too much neglected Truth, that these Gospel Doctrines, when strictly adhered to in
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practical Life, necessarily produce, what no Community can be happy without, Decency and Order. Happy are the People who are in such a Case, yea blessed are the People who constantly practise these peaceable these cementing Doctrines of the Christian Scheme.

BUT Christianity still farther obliges us to a Life of Decency and Order, from the Expectation of that State of Purity, Peace, and Perfection proposed to us through the Attonement and Satisfaction made for Sin by the Death of our blessed Redeemer. This State is only preparatory to a better. Our Immortality commences with our Existence; and tho' the Soul for a Time leaves her Tabernacle of Clay, yet through Faith in a Redeemer and Obedience to his Laws, she will re-assume at the Resurrection, her Body made more pure and more capable of enjoying celestial Habitations.

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The more purified and the more innocent then that we keep our Souls and Bodies, the more fit we shall be for the Enjoyment of the peaceable Mansions of the Just. We must exercise our Benevolence and Beneficence, while we are conversant with our Fellow-Men, otherwise we cannot have any harmonious Intercourse with the Saints in Light. But, if we always endeavour to order our Ways aright, and move steadily and constantly, to the Close of Life, in the Practice of every Christian Grace and Virtue, we shall not only gain Heaven, but likewise shall see, what must be the most splendid, and at the same Time the most awful of all Sights, the *Lord God omnipotent as he is.*

AND as Christianity thus variously obliges us to maintain Decency and Order, so likewise we shall find, upon Examination, that Masonry obliges us to the Observance of the same.

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THAT the Instruments used by Ma-
 sons are picturesque of our Duty, I have
 observed to you in a former Discourse.
 Permit me now to give you some Hints
 arising from the Structure of a regular
 well built House. There can be no
 Harmony or Convent of Parts in any
 Building without its Foundation be
 good. When a Superstructure rests up-
 on a tottering Foundation, it is liable
 to be hurried away either by the Vio-
 lence of a Flood, or the Fury of a Storm:
 But, when secured by the Foundation of
 a Rock, it stands firm, compact, and
 unmolested. From hence we may learn,
 that all Morality must be founded upon
 true Religion. The Will of God must
 be the genuine Foundation of all good
 Morals. All other Foundations, such as
 the Beauty of Virtue, moral Sense, the
 Reason, Relation, and Fitness of Things,
 can produce no real Order and Regu-
 larity amongst the Generality of Men.
 Such

Such Beauty and such Fitness of Things cannot bind the philosophick Mind, much less can they keep the unthinking Herd in Decency and Order. What binds the Consciences of Men must keep up good Order amongst Men. The Christian Religion does this. The Rewards proposed to those who constantly order their Conversation right, are a constant Spur to them to behave well: The Punishments proposed to all Evil-Doers, as certainly, when attended to, deter Men from the Commission of Evil. Let then this Revelation of God be the Foundation of all our moral Obligations, and our Virtues and Graces will of Consequence be acceptable to God, and beneficial to Man.

AND as no House can be compleat without a Door or Passage into every Part of it, so likewise our heavenly House, not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens, must have a Door by

which we must all enter in. Christ himself is the Door, the Way, and the Life, and it is through Faith in his Merits that we have a free Passage into the heavenly *Jerusalem*. 'Tis the Redemption and Satisfaction made by him, that opens unto every faithful and obedient Christian, the everlasting Doors of Heaven. To this Passage then let us have a constant and attentive Eye, and Decency and Order will always attend our Steps.

AND as every well built House has proper Doors, so likewise it will have proper Windows to admit the splendid Rays of the Sun. Hence we may be informed how dark and obscure our Apprehensions of a future State must have been, before the Sun of Righteousness arose upon our benighted Minds, with Healing in his Wings. Uncertainty, Doubt, and Conjecture harrassed the Minds of Men. But upon the illustrious

lustrious Appearance of the Day-Spring from on high, these wavering Clouds of Ignorance disappeared, and the promised Land is fully manifested to our View. Revelation is to the Mind, what Light is to an House: It discovers Objects, and ascertains their Certainty, which could not be clearly and distinctly viewed by the faint Light of human Reason. It presents a future State to our View, attended, if we behave well, with Glory, Honour, and Immortality: But if we are not careful to maintain an active Faith and good Works, amazing will our Misery be, and eternal in Duration! If these Truths shall be allowed to sink deep into our Hearts, we shall be always cautious, lest we fall out by the Way, in our Journey to our celestial Kingdom.

AND as the Admission of Light into an House, points out the Necessity of a divine Revelation, to dispel the Darkness

ness with which the human Mind was involved, so likewise the external and internal Polish of a fine House direct us to adorn both our Minds and Persons with every religious and rational Accomplishment. Divine and human Learning enlarge our Minds, extend our Prospects, discover our Relations and Connexions with Heaven and Earth, and point out our Duty to God and Man. And whilst we adorn our Minds with their proper Furniture, we should not forget to keep the Body in its proper Dress, because the Mind and Body, like Light and Shade, mutually set off each other, when properly habited in their respective Ornaments.

AND as the Polish and Furniture of an House give us useful Hints to polish the whole Man, so likewise the different Degrees of Goodness of Apartments in an House shadow out to us the different Degrees of Rewards, which shall be allotted

lotted to us, according to our excelling in Faith and good Works. And since we shall all, at the great Day of Retribution, be rewarded according to our Degrees of Excellence, let us not be content to drive up the Rear in Heaven, but be ambitious of obtaining, by a faithful Discharge of our Duty, a Place of Eminence amongst Thrones, Dominions, Powers.

AND, from the Contignation and Union of the Superstructure, which, when joined with other supporting Parts, forms a solid and compleat Building, let us endeavour to maintain, without Strife, Envy, Wrath, Clamour, or Scurrility, both our religious and civil Liberty. Society, like an House divided against itself, till mutual Love and Confidence is restored, cannot stand. Mutual Wants suppose mutual Assistance, and Charity, if we exercise it in all its Branches, will bind us fast together in brotherly Love and
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brotherly Kindness. Mutual Love and Charity produce the same Order in Society that Attraction does among the heavenly Bodies, only with this emphatical Difference, that the heavenly Bodies perform their regular Rounds in solemn Silence. Thus may we all, by setting aside all Selfishness, the Parent of all Disorder, unite in mutual Love and Kindness, and endeavour to be good Supporters only of that which we are sure is right, and then we cannot fail of being agreeable to one another, and of maintaining, what has been long wanted, the Peace of our *Jerusalem*.

F I N I S.

